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(ENGLE-CUBA)

WASHINGTON--SEN. CLAIR ENGLE, D-CALIF., SAID TODAY THAT U. S. INTELLIGENCE

OFFICIALS HAD MISTAKENLY ASSUMED THAT SOVIET STRATEGY WOULD NEVER CALL FOR OFFENSIVE MISSILES IN CUBA.

THAT ASSUMPTION, HE SAID, WAS THE "FUNDAMENTAL FLAW" IN THE U. S. INTELLIGENCE GATHERING EFFORT IN CUBA PRIOR TO LAST OCTOBER'S CUBAN CRISIS.

ENGLE, IN AN INTERVIEW CARRIED OVER CALIFORNIA TELEVISION STATIONS, SAID THE MISTAKE HAD BEEN POINTED UP IN A REPORT RELEASED RECENTLY BY THE SENATE PREPAREDNESS SUBCOMMITTEE.

HE SAID THE COMMITTEE HAD SETTLED UPON AN ESTIMATE OF 17,500 TROOPS STILL IN CUBA.

5/24--GE999A